

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION
OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

(Section of the Library
Association)

Edited by T. E. Callander, A.L.A.

Fulham Public Libraries



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EDITORIAL

THE next meeting of the Association will be the Annual Meeting, at Leamington Spa, on Wednesday, 8th June. Full details appeared in the May LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

Mr. Frank M. Gardner's address is now :
Woodhouse Moor Branch Library,
Leeds, Yorks.

We are indebted to a correspondent for information of an incredible situation at Caithness County Library. Those who follow with personal interest the doings of local authorities when making appointments will, by now, have ceased to be surprised at their vagaries. They may not, however, be too pleased to learn that a new element has entered the already fierce competition for jobs. Following an advertisement by the Caithness County Council for a librarian, it was recently announced, at a meeting of the Education Committee, that a member of the County Council, one J. W. Mackay, J.P., had applied for the position, and had been placed on the short list. It was explained to the Committee that, should this candidate be successful, he would resign his councillorship and wait six months before taking up his appointment. We suggest that his resignation is long overdue. Alternatively, that if he is successful the Council of this Association should offer him gratis, and as a prize for his nerve, a correspondence course for the Elementary Examination of the Library Association.

Will correspondents please note that all letters intended for publication in THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT must bear the name and address of the sender. Whilst we realise that the use of a pseudonym is occasionally desirable, we wish to make it clear that all letters which do not comply with our rule receive no consideration for publication.

A most successful meeting of the Association was held at Dagenham on Wednesday, 11th May. About 150 members assembled at Chadwell Heath Station at 3 p.m., and travelled by private bus to the works of the Ford Car Company. Much as we appreciated the privilege offered to the section of inspecting this factory, we must admit that our impressions were mainly of a continuous and shattering noise, and of an atmosphere of ruthless and soul-killing efficiency. It is probable that such an atmosphere is necessary to mass production, but one cannot but wonder if the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Brown are thereby

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enabled, at a very small cost, to litter up what remains of the countryside, justifies the modern industrial machine.

After tea, and an inspection of the Chadwell Heath Branch Library, the meeting heard a paper on "Enthusiasms," read by Mr. E. O. Reed, of the Dagenham Staff. His address was not of a kind that can easily be summarized. It contained many useful suggestions, and, above all, reflected with brilliance a spirit which has vitalized the whole of the library service in Dagenham. The Chair was occupied by the Chairman of the Libraries Committee, Councillor McAlister, who gave a concise account of the difficult conditions under which the libraries had been established, and who impressed his audience with the enthusiasm of the Dagenham Committee. The meeting terminated with votes of thanks to the speaker and to the Dagenham authorities and the libraries staff, moved by Messrs. W. B. Stevenson and Gurner P. Jones. Both votes were carried with acclamation.

Although our impression was that every library assistant in London was at this meeting, we would urge possible absentees to take the earliest opportunity of inspecting the Chadwell Heath Branch. It is remarkable for an unconventional but efficient charging counter, a unique method of shelf lighting, an excellent stock, a clever system of cataloguing, and a general air of humanity.

The new cover of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT was designed by Mr. L. H. Beechey, of the Layout Department of Messrs. Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd.

THE MAY COUNCIL MEETING

AT a whole-day meeting of the A.A.L. Council, held on the 18th May, and attended by most of the London and provincial members, several matters of interest were discussed.

It was decided to proceed at once with the publication of *A Summary of library law*, by Mr. A. R. Hewitt. This book will be ready shortly, and will be sold at 2s. (1s. 6d. to members of the Library Association and its sections).

A new cover design was adopted for the journal.

The file of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT is to be transferred from Fulham to the Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24. The A.A.L. Library is also to be moved from Islington to the same library.

After prolonged discussion, a draft of revised rules of the section was approved. This draft is included as a supplement to this issue of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT,

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and will be submitted to the Annual Meeting for adoption. It includes many valuable recommendations put forward by the Midland Division.

Mr. R. D. Hilton Smith was appointed as the A.A.L. Delegate to the Bournemouth Conference.

The present period of retrenchment should be used as a time of consolidation and planning for the future. A committee of five members of the Council has been appointed to present to the Council a policy of development which will serve as a guide during the next few years. The Hon. Editor, as a member of the Committee, would welcome suggestions from readers.

The Council is in protest to the L.A. Council against the adoption of a resolution carried at the April meeting of that body. This resolution deplored the practice of employing in public libraries voluntary and unpaid labour *except in the case of persons who are, or have been, students at a recognized school of librarianship*. It is the unanimous opinion of the A.A.L. Council that no distinction of this kind should be made, and that *all* voluntary work is to be deplored as being against the interests of those who are at present dependent for their livelihood upon their earnings as salaried librarians.

The South-Western Division is to be invited to send a speaker to address the Central Association at a meeting during the next session.



THE JOINT CONFERENCE OF THE MIDLAND AND NORTHERN BRANCHES OF THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

By G. P. JACKSON, Leeds

THE Twelfth Annual Joint Conference of the Midland and Northern Branches of the Library Association took place at Scarborough, commencing on the evening of Friday, 29th April, and extending over the weekend until noon of Monday, 2nd May. At 8 p.m. on Friday a civic reception was accorded at the Town Hall. The Mayor, in extending a cordial welcome, remarked that in the past Scarborough had been subject to some severe sarcasm and criticism owing to the fact that a town of its size and importance possessed no public library. Now that they had brought themselves into line with the objects and views of the Library Association, he hoped to see Scarborough accorded a place on the library map. A pleasant and stimulating feature throughout the entire conference was the presence of Councillor Pindar, Chairman of the Library

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Committee. Whenever at liberty he attended the meetings, imparting an encouraging sense of welcome by his presence, and frequently adding thoughtful contributions to the discussions.

Mr. Arthur Rowntree, Editor of the recently published *History of Scarborough*, gave a very interesting and scholarly lecture on the town. Music, light refreshments, and dancing were on the programme. The first two items were excellent, but the other attraction, fortunately, was never attempted. The librarians "in the know" made themselves quite at home, and appeared to be having a thoroughly enjoyable time, but the "lesser lights" wandered about in disconsolate ones and twos, and very soon disappeared altogether.

Saturday morning saw the conference commence in earnest. Mr. W. A. Fenton, M.A., contributed a paper entitled "Financial crises and their effect on public libraries." Mr. Fenton's address was very disappointing, and obviously lacked the thought and clear insight one would expect from a person of his prestige. Two suggestions were embodied in his remarks, the first was that a union catalogue be formed of all the books of some considerable standing. The *modus operandi* is to print lists of such books, and circulate them to all public libraries asking for works in stock to be indicated. This being carried out, completed lists might then be sent round to all libraries. Under this scheme approved borrowers are to be granted a "union ticket," and so facilitate direct application to the library stocking the book required. The second suggestion was, that the Public Libraries Acts be consolidated, and adequate provision be made for lectures, adult classes, and similar forms of extension work. Mr. Fenton's paper invited criticism, but I hardly think he was prepared for the amount nor for the vigour of that which he received.

The address of Mr. A. B. Hyslop, Treasurer of the Carnegie U.K. Trust, which followed, was hardly of the type which lends itself to discussion. Mr. Hyslop spoke of the Carnegie Trustees' Library Policy for the years 1932-35. Briefly, the money for disposal is £280,000, and the allocation is as follows: County Libraries, £107,000; Municipal Book Purchase, £75,000; Regional Schemes of Co-operation, £10,000; National Central Library, £62,000; Irish and Scottish Central Libraries, £17,000; Boys' and Girls' Clubs, £3,000; the L.A., £10,000. It should be noted that the money for municipal book purchase is only applicable for towns with populations between 20,000 and 70,000.

A motor-coach accident did much to enliven the afternoon proceedings, but fortunately no vacancies for chief librarians will be advertised as a result. The services of Mr. Arthur Rowntree were once again requisitioned, this time to act as guide to the party visiting the Castle and the Roman signal station.

Tea at the Medical Baths provided an opportunity for discussing arrangements for the formation of a Yorkshire Branch of the L.A. A very regrettable feature

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was revealed by Mr. Smettem (Librarian, Scarborough), when it was made known that about a hundred personal letters of invitation were sent out to Yorkshire librarians. Of these librarians seventy possessed neither the interest nor the courtesy to reply.

After tea Mr. T. W. Muskett, Librarian, East Riding County Library, spoke of "Some problems of a rural county library." In his characteristic breezy and enthusiastic manner he told how lack of transport affected and modified his library system, and surprised many of his audience by stating that in the East Riding of Yorkshire cases still existed where children went to school on horseback. He was of the opinion that where the County Council could not afford a driver the librarian should drive the van. Personally he found it an interesting and dangerous occupation, and owing to road conditions quite as exciting as many organized motor-club trials. The book van as a publicity agent was of considerable value, particularly so as it was frequently stopped on country lanes by people who insisted on standing in the middle of the road under the firm impression that it was the local bus. In his opinion the East Riding was too sparsely populated to lend itself to a system of decentralization which had been carried out with considerable success in some parts of the country.

Mr. Muskett's enthusiasm was not reflected in the next speaker, Mr. A. C. Curtis, who amazed me by saying so little and making it last so long. Mr. Curtis's pet aversion is evidently the examination system. He holds that the fact of an assistant passing an examination on paper is no proof that he can apply the knowledge to library practice. So far so good, but when he supports his conviction by citing futile examples of unqualified assistants surpassing and outshining qualified ones, then it degenerates into mere conjecture. In the course of discussion Mr. Nowell (Manchester) said he was of the opinion that junior assistants were far too slack and casual to-day!!! Routine work, embracing the carrying of books and similar trivial tasks, was considered *infra dignitatem* to the average junior.

By way of contrast Mr. Nowell exemplified his junior days, when he worked fifty-four hours per week, and reported for duty at 6 a.m. every Wednesday for the purpose of washing the windows. Regarding the examinations, he stated that if he obeyed his conscience he would have to fail quite 90 per cent. of the candidates he examined. When the new syllabus comes into operation next year, he hopes to see the standard raised to some considerable extent. If I were Mr. Gardner I should say, "These statements are as shocking as a pin in the posterior." But I am not Mr. Gardner, I possess neither his writing ability nor his courage, so I will merely remark I hope Mr. Nowell will be prevailed upon to address a meeting of the A.A.L. in the very near future.

At this time of the year sea mists are more unwelcome than uncommon at Scarborough, and after spending most part of Sunday endeavouring to view the

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numerous natural (and other) beauties of the town through a cold, damp, and clammy atmosphere, I was well pleased to be able to settle down to warmth and cheerfulness in the lounge of the Pavilion Hotel to listen to the third session.

This was occupied by an address from Mr. Smettem, the Librarian of Scarborough, on "Notes on the working of a new library service." Mr. Smettem has done great work at Scarborough. He is responsible for securing 36 per cent. of the population as borrowers at the library. This figure is made more remarkable by the fact that it does not include juvenile borrowers. The issues for the past year exceeded the half million mark. His record is truly one of success. One thing for which he made a plea, was an evaluated list of books published. Such a list published by the Library Association would supply that desideratum—the reliable and unbiased review. Arising out of this, Mr. Singleton (Accrington), who occupied the chair, asked for a definition of a good book. Had I been possessed of the courage to rise to the occasion before so many chief librarians, I might have passed on for his consideration the definition given by Mr. A. C. Ward in that delightful little book, *The Foundation of English prose*: "Great books are those which continue to give pleasure even when we are thoroughly familiar with the story."

Next on the programme came Mr. H. Woodbine, of Birmingham, to speak on "Library educational policy." Mr. Woodbine's plea was for the development of correspondence classes and the institution of oral classes at suitable centres. To the many failures in examinations he attributed the uneven library hours and the conditions of the profession. The problem of reintroducing a preliminary test for a limited period to enable assistants already in the profession to qualify was not sympathetically received, and Mr. Woodbine regretted he could not support any resolution upon those lines. A modification in the new syllabus was called for in order to give more time to students qualifying for the final examination.

Monday brought the last session of the conference. Mr. R. B. Barnes, B.Sc., of the Administration Department, Manchester Public Libraries, gave an address on "Technical libraries: a review of their resources and potentialities." Mr. Barnes remarked that practically every librarian regarded it as his duty to familiarize himself with local history and topography, but how many librarians went to the trouble of gathering an acquaintance with the local trades and industries? The latter qualification, according to Mr. Barnes—and we will not dispute it—is of much more importance and practical use than the former. His paper was full of practical ideas. He appealed for a system of exchange with foreign countries for patent specifications. For the benefit of readers who leave their intelligence on the library door-step, he advocated an enquiry desk so situated as to catch the eye of every user of the library. He also stressed the value of foreign periodicals.

Mr. E. Austin Hinton, B.A., City Librarian, Coventry, delivered the final

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paper on "The Working of regional library systems." The remarks made were based upon the working of the North Regional Scheme, which had its nucleus in the formation of a union list of periodicals in the Newcastle area. Application for the interloan of books is at present entertained chiefly from the Library of Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society, and this will obtain until the union catalogue, now in preparation, is completed. Recourse is frequently made to the N.C.L. As opposed to the Midland Regional Scheme, which is now self-supporting, this scheme is worked entirely from the Carnegie grant. Arising out of Mr. Hinton's remarks, a resolution was passed asking the L.A. to prevail upon the Government to grant special postage rates for the interloan of books. This was rather amusing, for when the very same suggestion was brought forward by Mr. Fenton on the first day of the conference it was the subject of much mirth and considered to be rather a good joke. Perhaps the old Spanish proverb elucidates the situation—a wise man changes his mind, a fool, never.

One word for the workers of the week-end: Mr. Smettem, who carried the cares of the conference upon his shoulders, and Mr. G. K. Wilkie, of Leicester, who was responsible for so much of the organizing. Numerically the conference may have been slightly disappointing, but the quality of the meetings was high, and the dovetail arrangements formed an adequate testimony to the thoughtful and careful labours of those responsible.

VALUATIONS

By FRANK M. GARDNER

AMONG books published nowadays, it is not often that one comes across anything which has any professional interest for the librarian. It is seldom, indeed, that one finds anything so important as Mrs. Q. D. Leavis's *Fiction and the reading public*, which during the past week has stimulated, humiliated, annoyed, and impressed me by turns. I propose, therefore, to leave the library bulletins for a while, and devote this "Valuations" to a discussion of *Fiction and the reading public*, and the issues it raises.

I suppose many of you will have read the book. If you have not, I would most earnestly advise you to do so without delay, for its subject not only intimately concerns our profession, but its ideas are a most important sidelight on what I will call, for want of a better word, the philosophy of librarianship.

Ostensibly, *Fiction and the reading public* is a survey of fiction reading from Elizabethan times to the present day. Actually, it is a blasting denunciation of modern literary taste.

The first part of the book, which is devoted to a survey of the contemporary

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situation, is one of the most stimulating pieces of criticism I have ever read. Being something of an iconoclast myself, I love to see iconoclasm in others, and here is enough breaking of images to satisfy anyone. Mrs. Leavis writes as an avowed highbrow, and the range of her condemnation is very wide. No consolation will be found here for those librarians who protest against modern taste in reading, and quote with unction the writers of whom they approve. Dickens (always a favourite in annual reports when the fiction percentage is high) is "not only emotionally uneducated but also immature." *The Way of all flesh* is "now seen to have been not a great novel but a useful one."

Like the Bolshevik, who executes the bourgeois before the aristocrat, Mrs. Leavis is more violent towards the "literary" novelists of to-day than towards the frank lowbrows. Violent is perhaps not the right word to describe Mrs. Leavis's manner. Her chief charm lies in the delightfully casual way in which she expresses her opinions. Nonchalantly picking up her victims by the slack of the trousers, she sums them up in a contemptuous aside, and drops them back in the mud. Thus *The Testament of beauty* is "obviously dead and sapless." *Tono-Bungay* "was an admirable book when it came out. It is now simply non-existent." Rebecca West is a competent journalist. Ernest Hemingway's cult among the highbrows is unaccountable. Chesterton and Kipling are successful bad poets. John Galsworthy and David Garnett bring nothing to the novel but commonplace sentiment and outworn technique. And Shaw is no more than a useful medium for transmitting the ideas of the intelligentsia through to the masses.

It will be seen from these extracts how very, very high Mrs. Leavis's brow is. I can understand, and to some extent sympathize with, her point of view. As to the airman the country below loses its contour, so does the literary landscape seem flat to Mrs. Leavis, except for the range of mountains on which she stands. But the airman misses a lot of good scenery, and so, I think, does Mrs. Leavis. To compare H. G. Wells with A. S. M. Hutchinson is natural from her elevation, but I think that a closer acquaintance would improve her appreciation. Granted that many of the writers admired to-day will be found wanting in the future. It is merely a matter of guesswork to say which.

Mrs. Leavis's guesses are Lawrence, Joyce, Forster, Virginia Woolf, and T. F. Powys. To these chosen five she bows the knee in worship. Well, I have no quarrel with her choice. My only regret is that her pantheon is so small. I personally believe that *Point counter point* and *The Polyglots* are greater novels than anything those five have yet produced (excepting perhaps Joyce), and that *Kipps* and *The Old wives' tale* are greater novels than anything they ever will produce. But I may be wrong.

The trouble with Mrs. Leavis, as it is with all highbrows, is that she cannot admit the possibility of being wrong. Highbrowism is a cult whose mark is a

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pronounced intolerance. It consists of taking an attitude of immense intellectual superiority (this does not necessarily imply real intellectual superiority. The person of really superior intellect does not, by that fact, rail himself off from his inferiors). This attitude is an easy one to maintain. It is defended by refusing to recognize an opponent's capacity to attack. Mrs. Leavis, being, I think, a fairly new convert to the cult (she wears her cap rather self-consciously, and flaunts it with an unseemly pride), is even more fanatical a highbrow than most. Underneath her casualness, I suspect a desire to shock. The appeal of the bonfire is universal, and Mrs. Leavis is not immune.

Bearing this bias in mind, one approaches the second part of the book with caution.

Having decided that contemporary taste is bad, Mrs. Leavis sets out to show how bad it is by a comparison with the past. For the way in which she has gone about her task I have nothing but admiration. As far as it is possible to dig out the history of taste, Mrs. Leavis has done so. After tracing her path carefully from Elizabethan times to the present day, she comes to a triumphant conclusion that taste in reading, maintaining a high level until about 1800, began to decline with Scott, and has finally disintegrated into the abyss of the railway bookstall. Her argument is clear, and to some extent plausible. That there is more bad taste in reading to-day than ever before I am willing, nay, eager, to admit. I contemplate the horrors of the Wayside Pulpit, Woolworth film editions, and our periodical and daily press with quite as much revulsion as anyone. But though I admit that there is more bad taste, I draw back at Mrs. Leavis's real conclusion, that there is less good taste. To accept that statement I should need very much more evidence than she brings forward, more, indeed, than it is possible to bring forward. There is no basis for comparison, unless one is able to view exactly the strength of the terrific growth of the reading public.

In the times which Mrs. Leavis approves, roughly from 1580-1800, the presence of a reader indicated the presence of a person with a genuine desire for knowledge. The acquirement of a knowledge of reading and writing was in itself an examination in taste and culture. Nowadays, when everyone learns to read and write, whether he desires it or not, whether he has the capacity for using his knowledge or not, we have a very different situation. Naturally, there is an enormous body of people to-day who have no interest in reading as such, but regard it merely as a means of passing time. At one time these people were mute. Mrs. Leavis cannot generalize about their taste and culture, because few records exist of their taste and culture. What evidence we have is conflicting. On the one hand we have a love of music, as Mrs. Leavis notes. On the other we have an addiction to bear-baiting and cock-fighting, pursuits which are definitely not indicative of good taste. Mrs. Leavis has not, I think, taken these facts fully into account.

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Overwhelmed by the bad taste of the "substitute" readers, she concludes that this is a general level; that the bad taste of the many has affected the good taste of the few, and that there are actually fewer cultured readers to-day than there were two or three hundred years ago.

Myself, I rather incline to the opposite view, and will borrow an instance from the book in support of my claim. Speaking of the Elizabethan age, Mrs. Leavis says: "In London they had the theatre, where for a penny one could hear Marlowe's mighty line and the more subtle rhythms of his successors. And to object that most of the audience could not possibly understand the play and only went to the theatre because the alternative to 'Hamlet' was the bear-pit is beside the point for the student of cultural history; the importance of this for him is that the masses were receiving their amusement from above (instead of being specially catered for by journalists, film directors, and popular novelists, as they are now). They had to take the same amusement as their betters . . . and to argue that they would have preferred Tom Mix or Tarzan of the Apes is idle." I take this to mean that nowadays nearly all those people *are* watching Tom Mix or reading Tarzan. Yet I will guarantee that there are more people listening to or reading Shakespeare at any given moment to-day than there were reading or listening to him at any given moment at the time he was writing.

This of course is only one instance, and Mrs. Leavis has other evidence which is quite contradictory. The truth probably is, that while the cultured readers of to-day are few in comparison with the uncultured ones, they can hold their own in numbers with their equals of yesterday.

If Mrs. Leavis had not so unpardonably neglected the public library in her study, she might have discovered this, and modified her opinions accordingly. I should say that the public libraries of England issue, at a moderate estimate, upwards of a hundred million books annually. One would have thought that the number alone would have justified detailed study. Yet her observation of this enormous instrument for reading was apparently confined to a perusal of the Royal Commission's report for 1924, and a conversation with a librarian who offered her nothing more than a few tit-bits of scandal about the manipulation of statistics. On these credentials she makes the remarkable statement that "the fiction shelves of a public library commonly contain the classics and hardy popular novels of the past, representative works of all the most popular contemporary novelists, and (more rarely) the 'literary' novels of the age, but seldom what is considered by the critical minority to be the significant work in fiction." It is evident that her choice of public libraries has been singularly unfortunate. If she had been, say, to Dagenham, or Bethnal Green, to name just two libraries whose fiction stock I know to be first-class, Mrs. Leavis would have seen that such a statement is not only hasty, but silly. If she should come to the library I grace with my presence,

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I would be pleased to show her that her chosen five writers are not only represented, but read, and by people who lay no claim to the name of highbrow.

I am ready to admit, however, that the greater part of that hundred million is trash, even while pointing out that one can take quite a lot from a hundred million and still leave a respectable remainder.

That is why I appeal to all librarians to read this book, for Mrs. Leavis, within the limitations I have mentioned, has painted a very fair picture of contemporary taste. Her observation is acute, and though she does not hesitate at drawing the worst conclusions, her pessimism is excusable. The question that forces itself on every reader, and particularly every librarian reader, is, "Can anything be done about it?" Mrs. Leavis would say that we middlebrows are not qualified to do anything about it, but that is by the way. She is concerned purely with preserving literature for the people of the future, while we are concerned with preserving the people of the future for literature. Art, however great, is none the worse for a wider appreciation.

I will leave you to consider this problem. Its solution should occupy you for a long while, though I warn you that it does not lie in any policy of catering to the converted. The "onward and upward" school still has my support, in spite of the brave new world envisaged by Mrs. Leavis.

THE DIVISIONS

SOUTH-EASTERN DIVISION

ON Wednesday, 6th April, a meeting of the Division was held at Hove, when Mr. J. W. Lister, Chief Librarian, presided and extended a cordial welcome to all present.

Papers were read on "Suggested improvements in public library administration," each library in the area providing at least one paper. These were as follows: "Loan of books from the reference library, and reference library statistics," by Mr. A. Webb (Brighton); "Quo Vadis," by Miss E. M. Talmey (Hove); "Possible developments of the future," by Miss E. Stokes (Worthing); "A Free and unfettered book service," by Mr. E. Quinton (West Sussex); "Problem of the adolescent," by Miss W. Fox (Worthing); "Suggested improvements," by Mr. R. Rowsell (East Sussex); "Suggested improvements," by the Eastbourne Staff.

The best discussion the Division has heard for some time followed the reading of the papers, and the appreciation of the meeting to the writers of them was expressed very heartily at the conclusion.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Lister and to the Hove authorities brought a very enjoyable evening to a close.

GRACE L. DEAN, *Hon. Secretary.*

SUPPLEMENT TO THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (SECTION OF THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION)

GENERAL RULES TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE ANNUAL MEETING, 8TH JUNE, 1932

1. NAME

The Association shall be called the Association of Assistant Librarians (Section of the Library Association).

2. OBJECTS

Its objects shall be to promote the professional, educational, and social interests of its members by the reading of original papers, by discussions, by meetings of a social character, and in such other ways as may be approved by the Council.

3. MEMBERS

(a) The Association shall consist of Honorary Fellows and Members:

Honorary Fellows.—The Council shall have power to elect Honorary Fellows, who shall be persons who have specially identified themselves with the objects of the Association.

Members.—Only salaried persons engaged in library administration shall be eligible for election as members.

(b) Application for membership shall be made upon the prescribed form, and shall be considered at the next meeting of the Council following the application.

(c) Members leaving the profession shall cease their connexion with the Association at the expiration of the current financial year.

(d) The Association shall have power to expel, at an ordinary meeting, any member, after due notice and full report from the Council.

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4. SUBSCRIPTIONS

(a) Subscriptions of full members shall be paid direct to the Library Association, and as set out in the Library Association Bye-Law C 1, Note 3.

(b) Persons in membership of the Association prior to 1st January, 1930, and not having become full members of the Library Association (transitional members), may continue in membership on paying 7s., due annually on 1st January. These subscriptions shall be sent to the Honorary Treasurer of the Association.

(c) Transitional members of a Division shall pay their subscriptions to the Honorary Treasurer of the Division, who shall retain monies for divisional purposes at a flat rate of 2s. per member, and remit the balance to the Honorary Treasurer of the Association.

(d) Any transitional members being nine months in arrears with their subscriptions shall cease membership after due notice and warning.

(e) Transitional members wishing to resign must give notice in writing to the Honorary Secretary of the Association or the Honorary Secretary of their Division before 31st December, otherwise they will be held liable for the following year's subscription.

5. OFFICERS

(a) The Officers of the Association shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Editor, Honorary Secretary, and Council of ten London members and twelve Provincial members, who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting, such Council having the power to co-opt; but co-opted members shall possess no voting powers on the Council. The Officers, excepting the President, and the London members, shall be elected by a vote by ballot of the whole of the Association; the Provincial members shall be elected, one by and from each of the existing Divisions, and the remainder by a vote of the whole Association. The Vice-President shall succeed the President, and shall be nominated every third year from amongst the London members, and for the other years from the Divisions in rotation.

(b) Nominations for the above Officers and Council must be made by two (or more) members of the Association, and submitted, in writing, to the Honorary Secretary by 1st May.

(c) In the event of any of these offices falling vacant, the vacancy shall be filled as follows: (1) In the case of a London, a non-Divisional Provincial representative, or an Officer of the Association, at the first possible ordinary meeting, as hereafter. (2) In the case of a Divisional Provincial representative, by the

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particular Division in which the vacancy occurs. The method of election shall be as follows: after due notice has been given of the vacancy, and the date of nominations fixed, the names of those nominated shall appear in that issue of the official journal following the date of nomination. The actual election shall be held by a show of hands at the first ordinary meeting of the Association after the publication of the names of the nominated, but all those not able to attend the meeting, and wishing to vote, may do so by signifying in writing their choice, to the Honorary Secretary not later than the day preceding the meeting at which the election is held.

(d) The May Meeting of the Council shall be a meeting at which all Provincial members who attend shall have their travelling expenses defrayed out of the General Funds of the Association. The May Meeting of the Council shall consider the Agenda for the Annual Business Meeting, and shall decide what shall be deemed contentious matter. All such matter deemed to be contentious by one-third of the Council present and voting shall be submitted for the decision of the whole Association by means of a vote by ballot.

6. MONTHLY JOURNAL

A monthly journal shall be published and issued free of charge to all members of the Association. Subscriptions to the journal shall be at the rate of 10s. 6d. net per annum.

7. MEETINGS

(a) There shall be an Annual Meeting of the Association fixed to take place some time during the summer months.

(b) Ordinary Meetings shall be held monthly from October to May at such times and places as shall be decided by the Council.

(c) Special General Meetings shall be called on the requisition of twelve members of the Association, such meetings to be held within six weeks from the date of receipt by the Honorary Secretary of such requisition. Special Meetings may also be called by the Council.

8. DIVISIONS

(a) Applications for the formation of a Division shall be made in writing to the Council by not fewer than ten members in the proposed district. Each Division shall be bound by the rules of the Association, but may formulate special rules for its local government. All proposed local rules must be deposited with the Honorary Secretary of the Association for approval by the Council.

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4. SUBSCRIPTIONS

(a) Subscriptions of full members shall be paid direct to the Library Association, and as set out in the Library Association Bye-Law C 1, Note 3.

(b) Persons in membership of the Association prior to 1st January, 1930, and not having become full members of the Library Association (transitional members), may continue in membership on paying 7s., due annually on 1st January. These subscriptions shall be sent to the Honorary Treasurer of the Association.

(c) Transitional members of a Division shall pay their subscriptions to the Honorary Treasurer of the Division, who shall retain monies for divisional purposes at a flat rate of 2s. per member, and remit the balance to the Honorary Treasurer of the Association.

(d) Any transitional members being nine months in arrears with their subscriptions shall cease membership after due notice and warning.

(e) Transitional members wishing to resign must give notice in writing to the Honorary Secretary of the Association or the Honorary Secretary of their Division before 31st December, otherwise they will be held liable for the following year's subscription.

5. OFFICERS

(a) The Officers of the Association shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Editor, Honorary Secretary, and Council of ten London members and twelve Provincial members, who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting, such Council having the power to co-opt; but co-opted members shall possess no voting powers on the Council. The Officers, excepting the President, and the London members, shall be elected by a vote by ballot of the whole of the Association; the Provincial members shall be elected, one by and from each of the existing Divisions, and the remainder by a vote of the whole Association. The Vice-President shall succeed the President, and shall be nominated every third year from amongst the London members, and for the other years from the Divisions in rotation.

(b) Nominations for the above Officers and Council must be made by two (or more) members of the Association, and submitted, in writing, to the Honorary Secretary by 1st May.

(c) In the event of any of these offices falling vacant, the vacancy shall be filled as follows: (1) In the case of a London, a non-Divisional Provincial representative, or an Officer of the Association, at the first possible ordinary meeting, as hereafter. (2) In the case of a Divisional Provincial representative, by the

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particular Division in which the vacancy occurs. The method of election shall be as follows: after due notice has been given of the vacancy, and the date of nominations fixed, the names of those nominated shall appear in that issue of the official journal following the date of nomination. The actual election shall be held by a show of hands at the first ordinary meeting of the Association after the publication of the names of the nominated, but all those not able to attend the meeting, and wishing to vote, may do so by signifying in writing their choice, to the Honorary Secretary not later than the day preceding the meeting at which the election is held.

(d) The May Meeting of the Council shall be a meeting at which all Provincial members who attend shall have their travelling expenses defrayed out of the General Funds of the Association. The May Meeting of the Council shall consider the Agenda for the Annual Business Meeting, and shall decide what shall be deemed contentious matter. All such matter deemed to be contentious by one-third of the Council present and voting shall be submitted for the decision of the whole Association by means of a vote by ballot.

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(b) In the event of any Division lapsing into dissolution, no dissolution shall be deemed complete until such Division shall have submitted a satisfactory report to the Council, together with a final balance-sheet, and have handed over to the Honorary Treasurer of the Association all funds (if any) in the possession of the Divisional Honorary Treasurer.

9. LIBRARY

The Association shall maintain a library of professional literature, which shall be governed by such rules as the Council may from time to time determine.

10. BENEVOLENT FUND

The Association shall maintain a Benevolent Fund which shall be governed by such rules as the Council may from time to time determine. The Fund shall be used for the relief of members or their dependents, in urgent cases of need arising from sickness, death, or other causes.

11. PROCEDURE

Amendments to these Rules, of which six weeks' notice must be given in writing to the Honorary Secretary, shall be made only at the Annual General Meeting, or at a Special General Meeting ordered by the Council for that purpose.

WHAT THE COUNTIES ARE DOING

By B. OLIPH SMITH, Middlesex County Library.

WHAT are the counties doing? Can we say of them that they are going ahead by leaps and bounds, or must we perforce admit that they are dallying by the wayside? Is the pioneering spirit, which has produced such a widespread service in a few short years, still alive, or has it expired, discouraged?

These questions are answered by the recently published Annual Report of the County Libraries section. It shows that they are doing a very great deal. No tendency as yet to dally; no signs of discouragement. It shows that the baby conceived in 1919 has grown up into a bonny youngster. We may privately feel that it is coming to an "awkward age," that its character may change somewhat in the next few years, but these things do not as yet appear on the surface.

This year the Report (on the County Libraries of Great Britain and Ireland) appears in a fresh guise—as a purely statistical one. Most of those important figures which show the results being achieved are compared with the corresponding ones for 1928—a new feature which enables lazy people like myself to see at a glance what actual progress is taking place. In many instances, too, averages for the whole country are given, so that librarians and committeemen may see at a glance whether they are "up to scratch."

The figures of progress are reassuring. Borrowers are up—in England to 13 per cent. of the population served. Book stocks show the striking increase of 43 per cent. in three years—partly to be explained by the comparative youth of the service. The view is, of course, somewhat commonly held that the counties have more money to spend on books than their urban brethren. The compilers of the Report have gently pricked this bubble, by comparing the cost per head of population for books and binding with the figures given in the London and Home Counties Report; this shows that the counties spend only 2.17d. per head, compared with 3.38d. for the urban districts—the more interesting as being one of the few points on which any comparison between the two services is at present possible.

Library centres are increasing in size—an encouraging sign; there are now 84 centres with book stocks of over 2,000, which is few enough, but better than the 30 of 1928. It is less pleasing to be reminded that there are still many with less than 100 books; 48 per cent. to be precise. One finds it difficult to believe that any useful purpose can be served by a library of this size. Let us not be deceived by the gratitude of small villages, which, having been starved of any reading in the past, rapturously welcome 100 new books. This is not a library service. Its only advantage over the old "village library" is that it suffers a change at more

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or less regular intervals—less regular in some counties, if one may believe all that one hears. The principle applies in the urban districts as well; the centre in a school, which is adequate for a village, is far less satisfactory in more populous districts.

Issues show an increase of 63 per cent., a figure so much greater than the increase in book stocks and the numbers of readers registered as to indicate an increasing quality in the service provided. This may be not unconnected with a slight improvement in staffs and salaries, although both remain inadequate. The average staff of the English counties is five and one-third, including the librarian. The average salary in the same country is £132—this in a branch of the profession which probably makes much greater demands on the time, the enthusiasm, and the organizing ability of its members than does the urban service. Scotland is the worst of the four countries, at £95. I never believed these Scotch jokes before!

Figures such as those quoted, taken in conjunction with the general lack of expenditure on buildings and newsrooms, suggest that the cost must be very much less than in the towns. In actual fact we find that it is 3·9d. per head of population in the English counties, compared with 14·8d. for London and the Home Counties. The discrepancy is far too great. It may be a striking testimony to the efficiency of the county service; it may underline the oft-repeated argument that the towns spend too much on buildings; but it is nevertheless too great a difference. The county library movement has suffered since its inception from the cry of cheapness. We started without any experience to guide us, little anticipating what a snowball growth was in store. We talked in terms of a farthing rate. We dealt in "boxes of books." We thought we could provide a modest but adequate service for "half of nothing." Well, we fulfilled the first condition; we have provided a modest but surprisingly efficient service very cheaply. But that service is, in many places, no longer enough. Supply has created demand—so large that it cannot always be met by our original methods.

We must learn to stop prating about the wonderful cheapness of our library service. The public would get a far more economic return for their money as a general rule if we doubled the cost. Let us realize the pitfalls into which the cry of cheapness has led us. Let us be honest with ourselves, and admit that our borrowers are not, in general, enjoying a service which bears comparison with that obtaining in the towns. Let us, once and for all, give over saying, "But look at the difference in cost," whenever comparisons are made. To spend as little as possible is no virtue, to spend wisely is. We know our service is cheaper, and that in the selection of books provided it makes many small urban libraries look silly, but let us not blind ourselves to its weaknesses. We have much to feel proud of, in view of our youth, but there is still so much to be done.

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The Report, as has been stated, is purely a statistical one. It presents results, not methods. Within these limits, it is a big advance on its predecessors. It shows clearly the progress which is being made, and enables accurate comparisons to be drawn between the work of different counties. It does not, unfortunately, furnish any information on the methods which have been used to achieve these results. We have no clue, for instance, as to how fast the branches in the "populous areas" are being housed in special buildings. We should like to see some differentiation between centres and branches in the tables. What developments are taking place in methods of transport? What further examples of co-operation are in action?

And what of future policy? How far are we from the day when all our populous areas will be served from proper branch libraries administered by trained assistants? What is going to be done to improve the service to the villages? Are we to see the larger villages arranged in groups and administered by special assistants, who will visit each once a week; or shall we retain our voluntary librarians and have a "liaison officer" to visit each centre once a month or once a fortnight, to maintain enthusiasm and efficiency?

The format of the Report is quite pleasant. The tables are set out both clearly and with a due regard for economy of space. Where figures are given for comparative purposes, as they frequently are, italics are used, and the result is commendably clear.

Yes, a striking record of progress under difficulties. But how was it done?



THE NORTHERN REGIONAL CATALOGUE

By Miss M. S. TAYLOR, M.A., F.L.A.

DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTH-EAST DIVISION
20TH APRIL, 1932

OPINIONS about cataloguing and its complications are many and varied. The great general public never realizes that there are any difficulties, or why librarians should make such a fuss about the whole business. Commercial firms turn out catalogues of furniture, catalogues of bulbs, catalogues of anything, without this bother. In fact, a borrower once said to me, "Any fool could catalogue a library!" Certainly, he was in an extremely bad temper,

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because he had been looking for an Edgar Wallace under the wrong title, but it shows what the popular attitude to our work usually is.

On the other hand, a little learning can be a very dangerous thing. The average junior assistant crams the 174 rules of the Joint Code, plus a few choice morsels from Cutter, plus the stock arguments in the Cards versus Sheaf, Dictionary versus Classified controversies. Having pushed all this valuable information into his head, he sits for Section 4 of the L.A. Examinations, passes, and henceforth considers himself competent to catalogue any library, even the British Museum!

But if you want to know what is really expected of a cataloguer—at any rate in America, if not in England—turn to Margaret Mann's textbook, and study the essential traits of character that are listed there. According to Miss Mann, cataloguers must be possessed of nineteen virtues. These include Patience, Adaptability, Speed, Imagination, Accuracy, Pleasantness, Industriousness, Initiative, Dependability, and ten others. Then, with true American attention to detail, she explains how to develop one's powers in each case. Here are the instructions for Forcefulness:

- (a) Take a job and put it through.
- (b) Push yourself to get out the mass of work that needs to be done.
- (c) Dig out information that is hard to find.
- (d) Be able to maintain confidence in self and work.

Best of all, I like Mental Curiosity, which implies "an enquiring mind which will find out why one book is different from another, what relation one subject has to another, what variety of names an author has used. In other words, the cataloguer must show research ability, and be able to interpret books written in any language."

From all this you will naturally infer that the cataloguer's life is a harassed one. Day by day she spends her energies on tedious and exacting tasks, shaming Hercules by her labours, and rivalling Job in patience, while her spare time is taken up in learning every available language, from Chinese to the dialects of Africa! But, according to Miss Mann, "With the conviction that what one is doing is vital and indispensable to the success of the organization will come an impetus to acquire all the qualifications which will perfect one in the chosen line."

I do not agree entirely with these statements. For example, nothing on earth would induce me to learn Chinese. The fact that the alphabet consists of hundreds of signs, all of which have to be memorized, is quite enough to damp my ardour. But I do consider Miss Mann is right when she says one must have belief in one's work. I am sure that the Union Catalogue of the Northern Regional Libraries is "vital and indispensable to the success" of the Regional

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scheme, and, because of that belief, I have chosen it as my subject to-night. But, before I explain details of the work, I want to give you a brief account of the whole movement for union cataloguing, and how it arose.

As one might expect, the movement began in London, which, as you know, is divided up into twenty-eight metropolitan boroughs. Each of these boroughs controls its own affairs entirely, and has nothing to do with its next-door-neighbour's. For years the public libraries have had the efficiency of their services hampered, because any attempt at co-operation was frowned upon by those in authority. Librarians agreed that the position in London was absurd, and that a union catalogue was badly needed, but there the matter ended. Mr. Seymour Smith once contrasted the position of a Londoner with that of a citizen of a large provincial town like Manchester. If a Manchester reader lived at the extreme end of the city and wanted to refer to the complete works of Thomas Hobbes, he need only go to the nearest branch library where, if the book were not in stock, it would speedily be obtained from the central. But an inhabitant of Bethnal Green could only apply at the Bethnal Green Borough Library, and if there were no copy there, he would have to go without.

The need for co-operation among the London libraries was urged as far back as 1902. In that year, Professor Sidney Webb spoke at a meeting, on "The Library service of London: its co-ordination, development, and education." Professor Webb pointed out how each of the two hundred libraries in London (here he included private ones as well), had its own catalogue, "on its own particular system," and knew nothing about the stock of the others. He said that "the library service of a great city . . . ought . . . to be something more than a couple of hundred almost accidental heaps of miscellaneous volumes, each maintained in jealous isolation from the rest, and limited in its public utility by the lack of communication between the heaps—usually by a dense ignorance in those in charge of each heap as to what may be hidden in every other heap." Of course, this situation has been the same all over England.

The subject was discussed and discussed, but no real move was made for twenty-five years. Then, in 1927, at the Fourth Conference of the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux, Mr. Seymour Smith read a paper on "The Reference libraries of London: is a union catalogue a practical proposition?" He emphasized the waste of time and effort that went on in London, showed the advantages of co-operation, and outlined plans for achieving this ideal. As a result, the following resolution was passed:

"That this meeting considers it desirable that a union catalogue of all the books in the Municipal Reference Libraries of London be compiled, and suggests that a panel of voluntary cataloguers be enrolled through the Library Association and the London University School of Librarianship, and further, that the Library

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Association be approached by ASLIB with a view to intermediate steps being taken to obtain the assent of the librarians of London for carrying out this work."

By the Fifth Conference, the Society of Public Librarians had promised its support, and a committee had been appointed by the London and Home Counties Branch of the L.A. The plan of voluntary cataloguers was found to be impracticable, so it was decided to approach the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust for a grant, and to appoint a qualified staff. The money was promised, and work begun in 1930.

The Carnegie Trustees were particularly interested in any movement towards co-operation, and, in their eyes, the London Borough Reference Libraries' Union Catalogue was a further step in that direction. They had already subsidized the World List and the work of the Joint Standing Committee in Library Co-operation. They realized, too, the tremendous advantages that would ensue from regional schemes, but that interloaning on such a large scale could only work satisfactorily if each region had a catalogue of their total stock. Thus, when the four counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, Durham and Westmorland applied for a grant in 1930 for the Northern Library Scheme, the Trustees promised £3,000, and it was understood that this was mainly to cover the cost of compiling a union catalogue. Regional schemes have since been formed in the West Midlands and in Wales, while there is talk of a fourth, probably in the South. Then, in Cornwall and in Nottinghamshire, there are two small schemes for interloaning and interchanging catalogue slips which have been in existence for some years. Interesting co-operation developments are also taking place in South Africa, as readers of this month's *L.A.R.* will know.

The report of the Provisional Committee set up in the Northern Library Region stated the decision "that an author union catalogue, in sheaf form, should be compiled of all books (other than novels and junior books), and periodicals contained in the participating libraries, and that a duplicate of the catalogue should be supplied to the National Central Library." This phrase, "a duplicate of the catalogue should be supplied to the National Central Library," shows an even broader vision, extending beyond mere regional co-operation. The National Central Library is, indeed, a national lending library. Through its own stock and through the stock of its "outlier" libraries, it has vast resources to call upon. When books cannot be supplied locally, each regional bureau can send on the applications to the N.C.L., and, in return, the N.C.L. can borrow from the region, just as it would from an "outlier." But the usefulness of such an arrangement is increased a thousandfold if the N.C.L. knows which region has the book that is wanted. Hence the reason for the Northern, West-Midlands, and Welsh regions supplying duplicates of their union catalogues

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to the N.C.L. The London Borough Reference Libraries' Union Catalogue is being housed there, and, so also, is the University Libraries' Union List of Periodicals. The London catalogue is on cards, but we are hoping each region will adopt the same standard sheaf form, and the only difference among the duplicate copies will be the colour. For example, the Northern copy for London is typed on a yellow sheet and the West-Midlands on a pink. All these will be amalgamated into a vast national catalogue, and the N.C.L. staff will be able to tell from the colour of the slip which region to apply to for a book.

Thirty years ago, the compilation of a union catalogue would have been a far more simple matter than it is now. Libraries used printed catalogues which did not become obsolete for many years, since fewer books were added and very few withdrawn. Now, the work of keeping such a catalogue up-to-date will be a big task. Of course, while we are compiling the Northern Regional one, we are putting in the additions and taking out the withdrawals of the libraries already finished. But, certainly, some of the methods proposed for compiling a London Union Catalogue in 1902 would be impossible to follow now. One suggestion was that librarians should mark in their copies of the British Museum catalogue, the books they possessed, and then a combined list could be compiled of "Books not in the Museum."

For some years the idea was prevalent that any kind of union catalogue must be based on that of the British Museum. This was quite natural, since the British Museum catalogues are models of first-class, accurate work. But there are definite practical reasons against regional catalogues, especially, following them. First, the complete author catalogue has been out-of-print, and, consequently, out-of-date, for many years. We could not work from the various special and subject-indexes, neither have we access, like London librarians, to the current reading-room volumes. Secondly, the Museum catalogues follow a special code of rules that no other library in the country uses, whereas the Anglo-American code has been widely adopted. For these reasons, the catalogues of the Regional schemes are being compiled according to the last-named.

In the Northern Regional Library Author Catalogue, we have kept strictly to the primary purpose of a catalogue, which is to give sufficient information to locate a particular book or particular edition of a book. It is, above all, a finding list, not a bibliographical reference tool. We want to know what library, or libraries, possess copies of a book, and, approximately, how much the postage will cost. Hence, pagination and other collation details do not trouble us, but the number of volumes and the size are important. Each entry consists of: (1) the author's full name, and we spare no pains to find the correct form of this; (2) the title, abbreviated if long; (3) the number of the edition; (4) the date; (5) the

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number of volumes; (6) the size, if quarto, or over; (7) the series, if important; and (8) the location.

Our method of showing location is unusual. We could not waste time typing Newcastle Public Library, or North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers on every appropriate slip. Letter abbreviations were difficult, as so many libraries belonged to Newcastle, so, eventually, each library was allotted a number. These numbers are set out in squares on each sheaf page, and an asterisk is put in the square corresponding to the library. Thus, if the entry for "*Nervous breakdowns and how to avoid them*, by Charles Atkinson," has asterisks in squares 1, 2, 3, 12, and 13, it means that the Lit and Phil, Newcastle Public Library, Armstrong College, Gateshead, and Sunderland Public Libraries all possess copies of the work. We do not concern ourselves with duplicate copies at one library, neither is internal location given. We only note that Newcastle Public Library has a certain book, not whether it is at one of their branches or at the central.

When the three years are finished and the catalogue completed (though, of course, it will have to be kept up-to-date—no simple task!) there will be between 300,000 to 400,000 entries, perhaps even more. It is difficult to form anything like an exact estimate. There are roughly about 2,000,000 books amongst the 32 libraries participating in the Northern Regional Scheme, but a large proportion of these will be fiction and juvenile.

Naturally, the libraries vary considerably in the number and type of books they possess. There is a large public library, like that of Newcastle, which caters for borrowers of every description, and has a stock of over 250,000, while the figures of some of the small public libraries show only 2,000 to 3,000. Besides the 20 municipal libraries, there are 3 county, 3 university, and 6 special. The varied nature of some is particularly interesting. The Lit and Phil is a large subscription library, catholic in its selection, though, perhaps, strongest on the philosophical and literary side. Durham Observatory Library is mainly astronomical. The names, Society of Antiquaries, Chemical Industry Club, North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, and North-East Coast Institution of Engineers and Shipbuilders, indicate the subjects specialized in by these libraries. There is also the Hancock Museum, which has an excellent collection of natural history periodicals from all over the world. These have not yet been catalogued, so the work will have to be done by the regional staff.

As a matter of fact, cataloguing a virgin stock is very much easier than transcribing other people's catalogues, which may or may not have been compiled according to the A.A. code. In any case, there are bound to be certain variations from the strict rules, which suit an individual library's needs far better. But these variations cannot be adopted by us. If Newcastle Public Library prefers to

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catalogue authors with hyphenated names under the last half of the name, and Armstrong College prefers the first, we have to alter one or the other when transcribing for the Union Catalogue. It would be impossible to have half the books of Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh under Austen-Leigh and half under Leigh.

Even checking by standard catalogues does not always help us out of difficulties. I spent a whole hour trying to find the correct way of entering Thomas à Kempis. This writer is not a saint, as I had first thought, so one cannot say he ought to go under Thomas, without further trouble. Several assistant librarians, when asked where they would look, said "Kempis," and I think that is where most people would look in a catalogue. But Kempis is from Kempen, the place in Germany where he was born, so, strictly speaking, it is only a topographical appendage. He has a surname, though comparatively unknown, Haemerken or Haemerlein, and there is a Latinized form of this, Malleolus. Standard catalogues gave the following variations:

Bibliothèque Nationale and London lending library, under Kempis.

British Museum, under Haemmerlein.

Library of Congress, under Thomas.

Edinburgh University, under A. Kempis.

It reminds one of the race in *Alice in wonderland*, when the Dodo said, "Everyone has won and all must have prizes!"

Then, we have the people who write under pseudonyms and the women writers who marry—very often two or three times. Like film stars, their matrimonial ventures are many! Here, I cannot do better than quote an example of Mr. James Duff Brown's:

"Mary Smith comes of a well-known literary family, and the name is a celebrated one in the annals of literature, all the lady's brothers and sisters, and her parents, being authors, and figuring in our catalogues under the name Smith. Mary writes a book and publishes it under the pseudonym of A. Nother. Then she marries Mr. Hopkins, and issues another book under the name Mary Hopkins, or, Mrs. Arthur Hopkins, her pseudonymous book having been a failure. After his wife has written several more books, Mr. Hopkins unfortunately dies—not because of such literary activities, however—and after a decent interval has elapsed, she marries Mr. John Corkscrew-Montgomery. Under the name of Corkscrew-Montgomery she writes several serious non-fictional books, but continues to use the name Mrs. Arthur Hopkins for her new novels." Problem! Under what name—Smith, Mary; Nother, A.; "Another"; Hopkins, Mary; Hopkins, Mrs. Arthur; Corkscrew-Montgomery, Mary; Corkscrew-Montgomery, Mrs. John; Montgomery, Mary Corkscrew; Montgomery, Mrs. John Corkscrew;—are her complete works to be placed by unfortunate cataloguers?

Once such points have been decided, other difficulties beset the compilers of

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a union catalogue, and these do not present the same trouble to cataloguers in a single library. Our greatest block is an author's complete name, and unless we get this correctly, or, at least, his first christian name, terrible complications and inaccuracies would occur in such a large catalogue, compiled not from actual books, as a rule, but from other catalogues. One library—say in Northumberland—may have an entry under Thomlinson, C. D. Y., *Gardening made easy*. Suppose we copy this as it stands. It will be followed by numerous other books by Thomlinsons—F. Thomlinson, T. T. Thomlinson, Arthur Thomlinson, Charles Thomlinson, and so on, indexed in this order. Months, or years, after, when we are doing, say, some Cumberland library, we may get the book again, *Gardening made easy*, this time by Charles Donald Yelverton Thomlinson. As about 100,000 slips or more will have passed through my hands in the meantime, and the Thomlinson entries swelled fourfold, I could easily mistake this for a new entry, type a slip, and put it in the catalogue, where it would be separated for ever from the C. D. Y. Thomlinson slip. Now, even in a large public library, there would be nothing like the number of entries, and a case of this sort would soon be detected. In the union catalogue, it is quite possible it might pass unnoticed. To prevent any such possible duplication, we are avoiding initials. We check every available source for the full name, and, if then undiscovered, we put the entry on one side to be looked up at the British Museum. This may sound pedantic, but I think you will agree with me that it is the only way to ensure an accurate useful catalogue.

Tracking down these authors who are coy about their christian names does involve a tremendous amount of work. One can sympathize with a man called Ebenezer Josiah using initials, but it is distinctly irritating to find him addicted to this practice when his parents have given him quite a normal name. My temper was severely tried the other day when I was trying to track down a J. W. C. Carr. In *Who was who*, the veil of anonymity is usually lifted, but even in death this man had preserved his secret. I began to wonder what horrible names the J. W. C. could possibly stand for, but, eventually, when I came across him in *Larousse*—of all places!—he was only Joseph William Comyns.

Another obstacle, and, again, only a burden to compilers of very large catalogues, is the separation of authors who have the same name. I believe that in the British Museum current catalogue, there are at least eighty-six distinct authors bearing the name John Jones. The best way of separating such authors is by dates, if these can possibly be found. Designations like "the younger," "miscellaneous writer," or even, "dentist to the Kaiser," seldom help those who consult the catalogue, whereas they usually have a vague idea of the period in which an author lived.

(To be continued)

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NEW MEMBERS

R. J. M. CAUL (Regional Bureau, National Library of Wales); F. J. Griggs (Ramsgate); Margaret Peters (Upper Norwood); Eric D. Smith (Willesden); Stanley W. J. Taylor (Dagenham); A. Shaw Wright (Middlesex County).

Midland Division.—Kenneth Boodson, J. Shepherd, Miss I. A. Wenman (Birmingham); Miss K. E. Clement (Warwick).

North-Eastern Division.—Miss J. Halbert (Middlesbrough).

TRANSFERS FROM TRANSITIONAL TO FULL MEMBERSHIP OF THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Central Association 5

CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

CENTRAL LIBRARY,
HIGH STREET SOUTH,
EAST HAM, E.6.
9th May, 1932.

DEAR SIR,—

Mr. F. M. Gardner writes: "We have not got the habit of writing to the papers about it."

Mr. F. M. Gardner also writes: "I have demanded a policy of not looking down but reaching down." And as a consequence—"I am at the moment wondering if . . . we [why 'we' ?] shall ever bring anything up." In common with the majority who have refused to be dragged up I ask: "From whence came this intellectual arrogance?" When it comes to the choice between a second-hand culture and personal liberty, I plump for the latter every time. Culture springs from liberty, and to attempt to graft it upon slavery is to reach for the moon.

Mr. T. C. Kemp, in his enjoyable paper, writes: "The English as a race are not poetry lovers." On what grounds is this and similar disparagements of the English race based? Simply because a scandalously degraded generation with half-filled stomachs prefers letting off steam at a football match to reading Humbert Wolfe. If we are not poetry lovers, from whence came our poetical heritage?

It is curious what a large number of people (including THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT) there are who seem to consider as fools any who have never heard of T. S. Eliot and all that tosh. Personally, and if a sense of proportion is taboo, then I am on the side of the fools.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE E. CLARKE.

[Mr. F. M. Gardner also writes: "What is this boloni?" This is!—HON. ED.]

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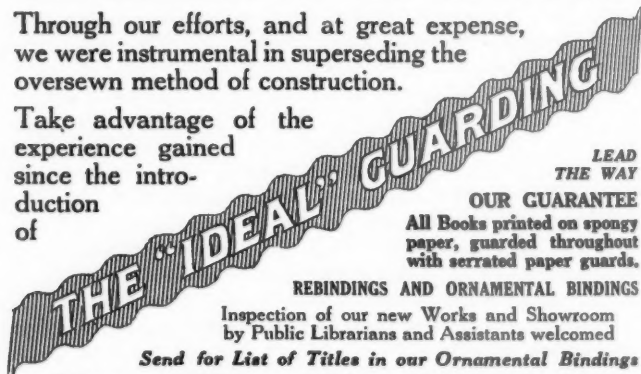
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